

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 SY-05 MCT-01
HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06
/103 W

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R 060704Z DEC 77
FM AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 444
AMEMBASSY PARIS
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY SANA
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
AMEMBASSY VICTORIA
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER
COMIDEASTFOR

C O N F I D E N T I A L DJIBOUTI 0669

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDIP, PINS, PGOV, EAID, DJ, FR
SUBJ: FRANCO-DJIBOUTIAN RELATIONS AFTER THE MOST RECENT
TERRORIST INCIDENT

REF: A. DJIBOUTI 0646, B. DJIBOUTI 0525, C. DJIBOUTI 0589

1. AFTER THE KILLINGS OF A FRENCH PILOT IN TADJOURA ON
OCT 16 (DJIBOUT 0525), THE MURDER OF A TEACHER AND THE
SERIOUS WOUNDING OF HIS WIFE AT GALAFI (DJIBOUTI 0646),
FRANCO-DJIBOUTIAN RELATIONS ARE A LOW POINT. AS A
RESULT OF THE LATTER INCIDENT, ALL FRENCH TECHNICAL
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PERSONNEL WERE WITHDRAWN FROM THE NORTH OF THE REPUBLIC OF
DJIBOUTI, OTHER THAN CERTAIN "INDUSTRIAL" INVESTIGATIONS
IN THE REGION OF LAKE ASSAL. THESE LATTER RESEARCHES WERE
DEFINED FOR THE EMBASSY AS CERTAIN ONGOING STUDIES OF
POSSIBLE SALT AND LIMESTON (FOR CEMENT) DEPOSITS TO WHICH
THE GOVERNMENT ATTACHES CONSIDERABLE IMPORTANCE. SERVICE
IN TADJOURA AND IN OBOCK (WHERE A FOREIGN LEGION COMPANY

REMAINS) FOR FRENCH PERSONNEL HAS NOW BEEN MADE VOLUNTARY.

2. TRAVELERS FROM FRANCE INDICATE THAT PUBLIC REACTION THERE HAS BEEN VERY STRONG IN CIRCLES THAT FOLLOW THE AFFAIRS OF FORMER COLONIES. CERTAIN FAIRLY RELIABLE SOURCES REPORT SHARP REACTION IN LABOR CIRCLES, WHERE THE CONDITIONS OF TEACHERS ARE ALWAYS CLOSELY FELT.

3. SOME FRENCH TEACHERS HAVE RETURNED TO FRANCE ALTHOUGH MOST OF THE 28 TEACHERS WHO WERE RETURNED TO DJIBOUTI ON 29 NOVEMBER WILL BE GIVEN CLASSROOM ASSIGNMENTS IN THE OVERCROWDED AND UNDER-STAFFED SCHOOLS IN THE CAPITAL (AVERAGE CLASS SIZE IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IS BETWEEN 55 & 60). WE HAVE HEARD REPORTS THAT CERTAIN FRENCH TRADESMEN OF SMALL AND/OR MARGINAL ENTERPRISES ARE NOW CLOSING UP THEIR AFFAIRS PRIOR TO RETURNING TO FRANCE. BEFORE THE RECENT INCIDENT, THERE WERE REPORTEDLY 350 FRENCH COOPERATION PERSONNEL IN DJIBOUTI.

4. THE PRESENT SITUATION APPEARS TO BE FOLLOWING A SCENARIO DESCRIBED BY THE EMBASSY SEVERAL MONTHS AGO IN WHICH THE UNDERTAIN RESOLVE OF THE FRENCH TO REMAIN IN DJIBOUTI WOULD BE TESTED BY TERRORIST ATTACK ON FRENCH CIVILIANS. SUCH ATTACKS COULD LEAD TO STRONG SHIFT IN PUBLIC OPINION IN FRANCE TO OPPOSITION TO EXPOSING FRENCH MILITARY AND CIVILIAN PRESENCE TO CONFIDENTIAL

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INVOLVEMENT IN CIVIL STRIFE. THE EFFECT OF THE REMOVAL OF FRENCH MILITARY PRESENCE IN DJIBOUTI WOULD MOST PROBABLY BE TOTAL COLLAPSE OF CIVIL AUTHORITY AND SUBSEQUENT TAKEOVER BY EITHER ONE NEIGHBOR OR BOTH AND PROBABLY EXTENSION OF THE OGADEN WAR TO THE BAB EL MANDEB.

5. THE EMBASSY AT PARIS IS REQUESTED TO FORWARD ANY RECENT VIEWS ON THE FRENCH RESOLVE TO REMAIN IN DJIBOUTI. CLARKE

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